

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 SS-20 SCI-06 OIC-04 FEA-02

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 NSC-10 DRC-01 CIEP-02

/093 W

----- 038899

R 011625Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7746

S E C R E T OSLO 492

STATE ALSO FOR T/IEP

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG PINR NO

SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHIC REPORTING FOR ENERGY CONFERENCE: ARNE
TREHOLT (NORWAY)

REF: STATE 13742

1. ARNE TREHOLT, POLITICAL SECRETARY TO NORWEGIAN COMMERCE AND SHIPPING MINISTER JENS EVENSEN, IS A LEFT-LEANING POLITICAL ACTIVIST WHOSE TITLE AND AGE (31) BELIE HIS POTENTIAL INFLUENCE ON NORWEGIAN POLICY. HE OBVIOUSLY ENJOYS THE SUPPORT OF JENS EVENSEN, WITH WHOM HE HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED IN TWO EARLIER CAPACITIES, AND HE ALSO HAS A SOLID BASE OF SUPPORT IN LABOR PARTY YOUTH CIRCLES AND, PROBABLY, A POLITICAL FUTURE.

2. BORN DECEMBER 13, 1942, TREHOLDT IS THE SON OF A FARMER, EDUCATOR, AND LABOR PARTY POLITICIAN WHO EARLIER REPRESENTED THE INTERESTS OF SMALL FARMERS AND IS NOW FOR THE SECOND TIME NORWEGIAN MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. YOUNG TREHOLT STUDIED POLITICAL SCIENCE, ECONOMICS, AND POLITICAL HISTORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OSLO, WHERE HE WAS CHAIRMAN OF THE LABOR PARTY STUDENT ORGANIZATION (1966) AND VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE NORWEGIAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION (1967). FROM 1969 TO 1971 HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE LABOR PARTY YOUTH ORGANIZATION (AUF), AND IN

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THAT CAPACITY HE ATTENDED THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN 1971 AS AN

OBSERVER ON THE NORWEGIAN DELEGATION. (WHILE IN THE US, HE RECEIVED A PARTIAL GRANT FROM THE EMBASSY FOR ADDITIONAL TRAVEL UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL VISITOR PROGRAM.)

3. AFTER GRADUATION TREHOLT WORKED BOTH AS A WRITER IN THE FOREIGN DEPARTMENT OF THE LABOR PARTY NEWSPAPER ARBEIDERBLADET AND AS A RESEARCH ASSISTANT AT THE NORWEGIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. HE HAS TAKEN A SPECIAL INTEREST IN EASTERN EUROPE, THE MIDDLE EAST AND, PARTICULARLY, GREECE, HAS WRITTEN A BOOK ON THE GREEK POLITICAL SITUATION, AND HAS PLAYED A LEADING ROLE IN THE NORWEGIAN GREECE COMMITTEE. IT WAS HIS GREEK INTEREST WHICH BROUGHT ABOUT HIS FIRST ASSOCIATION WITH JENS EVENSEN, WITH WHOM HE WORKED WHILE EVENSEN WAS PROSECUTING THE CASE AGAINST GREECE IN THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE.

4. LIKE MANY OF HIS ASSOCIATES IN THE AUF, TREHOLT DISAGREES WITH THE PARENT LABOR PARTY ON MATTERS OF FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY. HE OPPOSES NORWEGIAN MEMBERSHIP IN NATO, AND HE WAS AN ACTIVE AND OUTSPOKEN OPPONENT OF NORWEGIAN MEMBERSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. DURING THE CAMPAIGN LEADING UP TO THE 1972 EC REFERENDUM, TREHOLT WORKED IN THE PRESS AND INFORMATION OFFICE OF THE SO-CALLED "LABOR INFORMATION COMMITTEE AGAINST THE EC (AIK)"--A GROUP WHICH BROKE AWAY FROM THE LABOR PARTY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NATIONWIDE "POPULAR MOVEMENT AGAINST THE EC." THE NON-SOCIALIST COALITION GOVERNMENT WHICH CAME TO POWER AFTER THE REFERENDUM APPOINTED JENS EVENSEN CHIEF NEGOTIATOR FOR A FREE TRADE AGREEMENT WITH THE EC, AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO FULL MEMBERSHIP--AND EVENSEN CHOSE TREHOLT AS HIS POLITICAL SECRETARY.

5. TREHOLT'S WORK WITH EVENSEN DURING THE PROLONGED NEGOTIATIONS IN BRUSSELS MADE POLITICAL WAVES IN NORWAY. SOMETHING OF A FREE-WHEELER, TREHOLT ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION EMBARRASSED THE GOVERNMENT WITH HIS OUTSPOKEN COMMENTS TO THE PRESS. HE DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF LEFTIST YOUTH ON THE NORWEGIAN DELEGATION AND IMPLIED THAT HE HAD BEEN PLACED THERE TO KEEP THE GOVERNMENT HONEST DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS--TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT IT DID NOT GIVE AWAY ANY OF THE FRUITS OF THE ANTI-EC VICTORY. AT THE HEIGHT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS HE TOLD THE PRESS NORWAY SHOULD FOLLOW ICELAND'S EXAMPLE IN UNILATERALLY EXTENDING ITS FISHING LIMITS, A PROPOSAL NOT CALCULATED TO SOFTEN THE ATTITUDE OF THE EC TOWARD

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NORWAY. AFTER GROWING AGITATION IN THE PRESS AND THE STORTING, THE FOREIGN MINISTER ON AT LEAST ONE OCCASION HAD TO REBUKE TREHOLT PUBLICLY.

6. GIVEN THIS SOMEWHAT STORMY EXPERIENCE, WHICH MUST HAVE BEEN A SOURCE OF EMBARRASSMENT TO EVENSEN HIMSELF, IT CAME AS SOMETHING OF A SURPRISE THAT TREHOLT WAS AGAIN APPOINTED EVENSEN'S POLITICAL SECRETARY IN THE FALL OF 1973, WHEN EVENSEN HIMSELF ENTERED

THE CABINET UNDER THE NEW LABOR GOVERNMENT. WHETHER HE WAS EVENSEN'S PERSONAL CHOICE IS NOT KNOWN; HIS APPOINTMENT MAY HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE COMPROMISES WHICH THE LABOR LEADERSHIP MADE TO TRY TO ATTRACT PARTS OF ITS LEFT WING BACK INTO THE PARTY. IN ANY CASE, TREHOLT IS LIKELY TO HAVE INCREASING INFLUENCE ON THE FORMATION OF POLICY, AND AT THE MOMENT HE APPEARS TO BE ONE OF THE THREE OFFICIALS IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE--ALONG WITH EVENSEN AND UNDER SECRETARY MAGNUSSEN--MOST ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN PREPARATIONS FOR THE ENERGY CONFERENCE. EVENSEN HIMSELF IS THE OIL EXPERT, AND IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT TREHOLT HAS YET HAD MUCH EDUCATION ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ISSUES. BYRNE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PETROLEUM, IMPORTS, SUPPLIES, FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 FEB 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974OSLO00492
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: OSLO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740262/aaaacfk.tel
Line Count: 126
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: STATE 13742
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 MAR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 MAR 2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <31 MAY 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BIOGRAPHIC REPORTING FOR ENERGY CONFERENCE: ARNE TREHOLT (NORWAY)
TAGS: ENRG, PINR, NO, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005